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# SCIENCE.—SUPPLEMENT.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1886.

## THE RELIGION OF THE UAPÉ.

HENRI COUDREAU, whose geographical work in South America has won deserved tribute, gives an interesting account of the beliefs and observances of religion among the Uapé. We have already on various occasions referred to his notes on the manners and customs of this primitive Brazilian people. Only recently has any thing been definitely known of their mythology, a subject upon which they maintain a resolute silence to the whites. The orgies called 'dabucuri' were known to have a religious significance, but beyond this little was understood of their spiritual character, if, indeed, such an adjective may be applied to them.

The Uapé religion differs, according to Coudreau, from that of any of the adjacent people. There are for them two deities, — Tupan (from *Tupá*, 'thunder') and Jurupary. The former is good or inactive, universal, vague, representing, as much as may be, the general idea of deity; while Jurupary, active, terrible, the progenitor, is the particular god of the Uapé, as Yahveh was to the ancient Hebrews. Tupan created Jurupary, who is in some sort his minister of evil. There is, however, no antagonism between them. When Tupan visits the earth, and especially the Uapé country, Jurupary accompanies him as his guide. Once upon a time there was a virgin, but with no external attributes of her sex. The people were much troubled about her, and the shamans met at her lodge, smoked, and drank the sacred liquor of a fruit called ipadù. Then they left her. She drank much of that which remained, and thus conceived the deity. At the proper time the infant was released by the intervention of a fish. When born, the shamans put the uncanny babe into the forest, where he grew rapidly. Light issued from his body, and when he rubbed his fingers together, sounds like thunder startled everybody.

A feast was made, at which he appeared and ordered that all should fast, or he would kill the men and boys. Some children a little later ate of fallen fruit, notwithstanding the warning. Indignant at this, Jurupary killed and ate the children. The men came together, made a feast with a great quantity of fermented fruit-juice, made the god drunk, and threw him in the fire. From his ashes grew the palms from which are made

the 'paxiuba,' or trumps, with which his devotees make their religious noises, for the sounds cannot be called music by any stretch of courtesy. During the night of his incineration, the spirit of Jurupary was able to reach heaven by the miraculous growth of the palm. Before morning, in order that the women should see no living relic of Jurupary, the men cut down the tree, and fashioned of it the first sacred pipes and other implements. The sound of them, when properly prepared, is his voice. When living on earth, he dressed in a monkey's skin: therefore the sacred mantle (to see which is death for any female) is made of monkey-skins (hence its name 'macacaraua'), and is the especial symbol of Jurupary. At first the women sounded the paxiuba and evoked the god; but one day he pursued a priestess and deprived her of the insignia of office, and ever since, death by poison in this world, and the nethermost hell in the other, has been the portion of the unfortunate woman, who, willingly or otherwise, set eyes on the insignia of the priesthood. All these events are inscribed at large on the stones of Arapapa, at Papuri.

After this time the god revealed through the shamans his regulations for the solemn exercise of his religion in feasts and flagellations, fasts and dances. The sacred mantle is made of monkey skin or hair, mixed with the hair of young girls, woven with a particular fibre. It is without sleeves, and reaches to the waist. A truncate-conical hood, with eye and mouth holes, serves as a mask. It is surmounted by a coronet of feathers, and diversely ornamented. The sacred garment is securely hidden in the shamanic repository. A profane or secular robe, sometimes called by the same name, consists of a tunic of fantastically colored bark surmounted by a casque attached at the neck. These are common, but of the other only one or two are in existence in any single community.

The paxiubas are six feet long, four inches in diameter, hollow, with a lateral aperture surrounded with leaves, which rustle when the instrument is blown through. They are painted black, and the sound they emit resembles the roaring of a bull. They are not held so important as the mantle, being kept in running water near the village, where the women must often see them. This is not spoken of, and the shamans ignore it if they chance to know it. But the sentence of death is formal on any woman who sees the

mantle. The shamans administer 'taya,' which infallibly kills the culprit, either directly or within a few weeks, or even months, a point under the control of the poisoner. Naturally the Uapé women regard Jurupary and his mantle with becoming terror, which centres about the celebrations called 'dabucuri,' at which the mantle is exhibited to the males of the community.

These occasions are prepared for by a fast of two or three days. There are six dabucuri in the year, each determined by the ripening of a certain fruit, of which an intoxicating drink is made. They come in January, February, March, May, July, and November. The ceremonies last three days, and people come from fifty miles around to attend.

The time come, the adults paint themselves with black and red, and sing monotonous and dismal chants; and the shamans perform, for those desiring such service, the marriage rites, which seem to much resemble the civil rites of European marriage.

Later all the women are sent into the forest, and watched by a keeper. At the end of an hour, after the paxiuba has been sounded by men in festal attire, two or three shamans dressed as Jurupary, and covered with the sacred mantle, with thumbs and two toes on each foot hidden, the other fingers and toes fitted with long claws like the legendary god, appear in the feast-house, jumping on all fours, and striking with a stick, right and left, blows on the spectators, which are not returned. All this takes place in perfect silence, and terminates by the disappearance of the shamans. After sounding the paxiuba for a quarter of an hour, the women are recalled. All carry rods, with which the men and women whip each other. If a white man arrives, he may be admitted provided he will consent to receive a few blows, which he may afterward return with usury. After the flagellation, the women form concentric circles, and the men a large circle, each with the right hand on the shoulder of the one in front of him. Each dancer has a shrill flute, which he sounds, and moves up and down, right and left, by action of the lips. They move with measured step, at first slowly, afterward according to their state of excitement. The dancers drink the intoxicating beverage prepared for the occasion, and soon begin to jump, gesticulate, and act as if possessed by some frenzy; the shamans calling on Jurupary to present himself, which, through them, he excuses himself from doing on the ground that the women would become changed into, or would give birth to, serpents. The dress of the dancers is at first as usual; but, as the saturnalia progresses, it is gradually dropped as inconvenient. Pro-

miscuous intercourse between the sexes follows, with intervals of flagellation and inebriety, until exhaustion or daylight closes the performance for the time.

These horrible orgies are supposed to have been directed and planned by Jurupary himself, and to represent the character of the heaven to which his faithful devotees will be translated after death. The fasts by which they are preceded are rigid and painful, well adapted to produce hallucinations and visions. Men who have adored the god will reach him after death; those who have not will lose themselves on the long and difficult way. Halfway is the abode of Bishiú, an inferior spirit, where are detained the souls of those women who have unintentionally gazed upon the sacred mantle, — a sort of purgatory, — or, according to others, they are turned into serpents or caimans. There is also an ill-defined inferno at the bottom of the earth, where the worst people bring up, after being lost on the way to heaven. Here they suffer frightfully, and are controlled by a sort of demon.

Although Coudreau rejects the idea of a civilized origin for these myths and practices, it must be allowed that there is a decided flavor of mediæval Europe in the virgin mother of the god, the sacrifice of the god himself by men, the purgatory, hell, and heaven, and even in the fasts and flagellations. It is much what might be expected from the reception at a distant period of some ill-understood and misconceived notions of Christianity, befouled, modified, and mixed with native myth; especially if we suppose that the reception of the original attempt at instruction was separated from the present time, as it must have been, if there were such, by a long period of non-intercourse with missionaries or civilization. This seems to us the most natural explanation of an isolated development, such as these myths are represented to be; and as such it would form a most interesting chapter in the history of the evolution of religions.

#### ANOTHER FEATURE OF THE RECENT EARTHQUAKE.

SOME remarkable features of the recent earthquake on our southern seaboard were illustrated and described in *Science* of Sept. 24. Through the kindness of the *Railroad gazette* we are enabled to present a view of the effect of the same earthquake upon a section of railroad-track. The view is an exact reproduction of a photograph taken near Ten-Mile Hill, on the South Carolina railroad, after the earthquake of Aug. 31.

According to the statements of persons familiar